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RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 7582

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: SIX-PARTY TALKS, CHINA'S ANTI-SATELLITE
MISSILE TEST, TAIWAN'S POLITICS

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused February 8 on KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou, who proactively visited the Taiwan High Prosecutor's Office Wednesday to further explain his role in the alleged misuse of a special allowance during his tenure as Taipei mayor; on the DPP's proposed legislation concerning transitional justice and its plan to remove military guards and MPs stationed at Chiang Kai-shek's mausoleum; and on other political issues.

12. In terms of editorials and commentaries, the "International Outlook" column of the pro-status quo "China Times" discussed the Six-Party Talks and said it will be ridiculous if the Bush administration decides to restore the 1994 framework, which the United States itself had torn down. An op-ed piece in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" discussed the recent Chinese anti-satellite missile test. The article said "The U.S. won the Cold War. But in China it faces a different kind of challenge." With regard to the DPP's recent move to remove statues of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek from military compounds and parks around the island and its plan to eliminate military guards and MPs stationed at Chiang's mausoleum, an editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" criticized the move as de-Sinicization, while an editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" welcomed it as a move to push for justice. End summary.

13. Six-Party Talks

"Is United States Going to Restore the 1994 Agreement?"

The "International Outlook" column of the pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] noted (2/8):

"The 'Six-Party Talks' on the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula resumed February 8. But a bizarre episode has taken place, namely: The talks seem to have returned to the 1994 framework, which the United States itself had torn down. The Bush Administration, in particular, refused to recognize this framework. Wouldn't it be ridiculous if Washington decides to restore it right now? ... The 1994 agreement is something the Bush Administration has consistently opposed. Now Christopher Hill, the U.S. negotiator, intends to restore it in order to break the current impasse. How is the Bush Administration going to explain itself?"

14. China's Anti-Satellite Missile Test

"Hu Jintao, Military Clash over Strategies"

Paul Lin, a political commentator based in Taipei, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (2/8):

"... Despite China's insouciance, then going ahead with the test was clearly intended to provoke the US. ... The reason different Chinese officials gave different statements on the test hints at an internal power struggle among high-level officials. Hu inherited former president Deng Xiaoping's strategy of 'dimming our lights and thriving in the shadow,' and has even toned down the strategy and made it more manipulative. The PLA is taking the tougher, directer approach and wants in particular to manifest the military's influence before this autumn's 17th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) or to help former Chinese president Jiang Zemin and his supporters pose a potential challenge to Hu.

"This will without a doubt vex Hu, since he has been working hard to present China to the international community as on the road to 'peaceful development' rather than posing a threat to other countries. His reason for this is to gain access to more advanced military and space technology from Western nations. But the PLA could spoil Hu's strategy. What is happening now is a direct result of escalating tensions between Hu and the PLA. ... The US has been carefully watching the expansion of China's military abilities and has applied stringent regulations on exports to China. But if Hu continues his strategy of charming the international community, it could succeed in getting those regulations changed. The US won the Cold War. But in China it faces a different kind of challenge."

15. Taiwan's Politics

A) "Desinicization Hurts Tourism"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (2/8):

"Ever since the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) gained power, the government has been trying to rid the island of everything that has to do with China and with Kuomintang (KMT)

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rule, regardless of whether it's practical and possible. ... The mausoleum of the late President in Taoyuan County and Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Park in Taipei are tourist attractions that draw large numbers of visitors from the Chinese mainland. Changing the status quo would certainly keep away many mainland tourists."

B) "Push for Justice Mustn't Be Delayed"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (2/8):

"We strongly support the spirit of yesterday's decision by the governing Democratic Progressive Party to accelerate moves to promote transactional justice and human rights legislation, and press the government to investigate official responsibility for a wide range of human rights violations that may have occurred during the decades of authoritarian rule by the former ruling Kuomintang. ... [C]ontrary to claims made by pan-KMT politicians of a new 'cultural revolution,' all that the DPP is advocating is returning Taiwan to a more 'normal' state in which the fascistic values of authoritarians do not receive special protection or propagation with the resources and thus the authority of a democratic state. We should not understate the difficulty or the importance of this project. ...

"We need not naively assume that the DPP or its chairman have launched this action free of political motivations. However, critics in the authoritarian party should consider why the governing party and its leaders believe that the support of both 'pan-green' and 'middle' voters can be successfully gained by calls for 'transitional justice' and realize that the best way to reduce the 'market value' of the DPP's appeal is to help and not hinder the process of realizing transitional justice in Taiwan."

YOUNG